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ENGLAND'S DUTY

IN

THE PRESENT CRISIS:

4265.150

BY ST. GEORGE FREEMAN, LT. AR.

LATE COMMANDING ROYAL MALTA MARINE ARTILLERY.

“Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento :
Hæ tibi erunt artes ; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.”

WITH A MAP.

DUBLIN :
WILLIAM MCGEE, NASSAU-STREET.

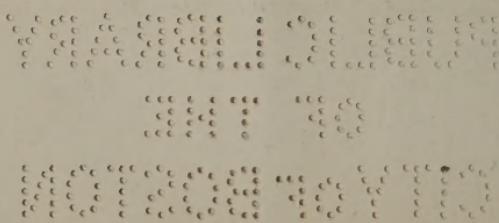
1877

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Family of
William Lloyd Garrison
July 8, 1899.





DEDICATED

TO

4265.150

THE GREATEST STATESMAN OF THE AGE

(LORD BEACONSFIELD)

WHO

HAVING ADDED AN EMPIRE TO THE ENGLISH CROWN,

WILL NOW SEE IT HIS DUTY

INDISSOLUBLY TO BIND THAT EMPIRE TO

ENGLAND.

HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ENGLAND'S DUTY.

THE War between Russia and Turkey has brought about a crisis in European affairs—especially in the relations of England to the other Great Powers as regarding her Indian Empire—that it behoves all lovers of their country seriously to consider.

During a long life I have given the most attentive and earnest consideration to public affairs. My official position has made it imperative that I should keep myself perfectly informed regarding the relative capabilities of the states of Europe—their strategetic position, and their relations to one another. I therefore without hesitation lay before the Empire my views regarding England's duty.

A prolonged residence in India, and frequent transit between England and India, adds the weight of accurate observation and knowledge to what otherwise might be considered views arrived at hastily and without thought.

The importance of the present crisis to us rests upon our relations with Hindostan—the necessity

imposed upon us of at all times keeping up the most perfect communication with our Indian fellow-subjects.

It is a foregone conclusion that our communications—intact and unquestioned—must be maintained through Egypt, both by rail and the Suez Canal. The first Russian that crosses the Balkans, the first bomb thrown into Constantinople from the “Tchitchagoff,” the “Spiridoff,” or other Russian iron-clad, will be the signal for the hoisting of the British ensign at Alexandria, at Port Said, and at Suez; and this step once taken, England’s last man and England’s last shilling will be pledged ever to maintain her supremacy over the ancient land of the Ptolemys.

The move will be a necessary one. Our responsibilities in India have not been of our own seeking. From the earliest inception of our eastern trade, through the events in which Clive made his name imperishable, through such difficulties as the dreadful 20th June, 1756, and the Indian Mutiny, step by step the burden has been laid on our shoulders—a burden greater than ever before was laid upon a people—a burden carrying commensurate glories and commensurate responsibilities.

The happiness and welfare of 239,900,000 human beings is in our hands—Hindoos, Mahomedans, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Christians—all of the great Ayrian stock from whence we have sprung—all in their incapacity for self-government appealing to our noblest instincts for protection and security.

Other nations, and too many denizens of our own island, imperfectly acquainted with the history of British India, are, I am well aware, under the impression that it has been lust of conquest and self-interest that has led us on to assert our supremacy in the East.

We must leave it to history to dispel such illusions. Our duty in the present is to march boldly forward upon the road travelled by our forefathers, a course that has ever been accorded the blessing of Heaven. We must not shrink from further responsibilities until the chain is complete, and England is connected with India by bonds more indissoluble than steel. Putting prejudices and our natural sympathies aside, Egypt must in certain eventualities be ours. Her autonomy is safe only so long as it does not interfere with our duties to helpless millions in India.

I maintain, nevertheless, that our work will at

best be imperfect—as imperfect as the chain with one faulty link—so long as our communication across the continent of Europe is not secured—so long as we must lose a week in the transmission of troops and materials between the Mediterranean and Straits of Dover by sea—in other words, *so long as our communication across France is not assured.*

Indeed, in view of the likelihood of our establishing rapid communication with India by way of the Euphrates Valley, and the retention of Egypt being then of small importance, our communication across France is of infinitely more consequence to us than our communication across Egypt.

In effecting the security of this communication there would indeed be much to contend with. It is not likely that France would willingly consent to the necessary surrender of territory—although indeed she has now for many years carried our mails that route, and it is surely apparent to all intelligent Frenchmen that the change must be submitted to sooner or later. It is painful to have perhaps to outrage the feelings and predilections of the French with whom for generations we have been on friendly terms. But we will be nerved to the suppression of weak natural senti-

ment by the consciousness that the real interests of 239,900,000 people must be weighed against the imaginary interests of 36,102,000.

The wounds that such changes make are soon healed. France has been in every way prosperous and has borne herself most nobly since the late war; it cannot be that it would be otherwise with her after the abandonment of a still further portion of territory. Apart from other considerations she would for the future have us as her inalienable ally—a permanent barrier against German arrogance and German annexation. If, however, as is possible, she would not consent to the necessary changes without war, we would be fully prepared for the sacrifices such war would bring. No nation would ever have entered upon war in a holier cause or sustained by loftier considerations of duty. Indeed no sacrifices in the lives of our sons or of our accumulated wealth could be too great for the accomplishment of such a glorious end—the placing of the corner stone without which the edifice of Indian Empire must ever be incomplete.

It has been well pointed out by a great historian that England would become an extinct volcano before she would submit to any form of Irish repeal—yet what would be the retention of

a poor island of 5,400,000 people to the interests of an empire of 240,000,000. If we would submit to such sacrifices for the retention of the one, to what sacrifices should we not submit for the retention of the other.

England, “the august mother of nations”—to quote the almost inspired expression of one whose politics I by no means endorse—England has carried her flag into every clime. *Nulla vestigia retrorsum* has been her motto from the days of William the Conqueror; where once her meteor flag has shone against the sky there it will fly for ever—unless in cases where circumstances of the deepest political significance, and reasons which no true Briton could fail to ignore, might render it desirable that its benign influences should be removed to other and more favoured spots of the globe.

And I have no fear but that when it has once waved in triumph over an unbroken line of communications at Calais, Douay, St. Quentin, Verdun, Chaumont, Dijon, LaTour, Grenoble, and Toulon, there need ever be any danger that our prestige in those quarters will ever be dimmed.

The proposed change is entirely in accordance with geographical knowledge. Ireland we know is geographically a portion of England—how

much more so territories within view of the cliffs of Albion, not separated by one-third the distance that Ireland, or more properly speaking West Britain, is separated from Holyhead—a distance now almost commanded by our guns, and that has been accomplished with ease by a swimmer.

The geographical portion of the question brings me at once to definite proposals. England's duty is to establish herself on French territory in the districts coloured crimson on annexed Map, viz : north of the Somme and the Aisne; north and east of the Marne to Dijon, and east of the Rhone to the Mediterranean. These are indeed the natural boundaries of France.

I make no mention of Nice and Savoy, which on every account it would appear better to cede to Italy. This generous policy would not only secure Italy as a firm and faithful ally of England in all eventualities, but would be a graceful tribute to a government that has latterly been practising the principles of religious liberty, and toleration and respect for the rights and feelings of others, to an extent never before practised except by ourselves.

Reference to the Map will at once show the importance of the change. It will secure us the

unquestioned high-road to India. Our men and material can be taken into trains in the sidings of our own barracks and arsenals, and conveyed by the Channel Tunnel in course of construction and through a territory over which the flag of England will wave unquestioned, without even changing carriages, to what will be one of Britain's greatest naval arsenals, Toulon. There they would be shipped on our transports; and passing through the Suez Canal, then also a portion of Britain, be conveyed within a few days to whatever part of India it might be necessary to reach.

At present the passage from Dover to Malta by sea (2,211 miles) occupies 9 days 9 hours; while from Dover to Toulon by rail (967 kilometres or 601 miles) would occupy but 18 hours; and from Toulon to Malta by sea (698 miles) would occupy 2 days 21 hours—making a total saving of 5 days 18 hours on the journey—all the difference between holding or losing India in these days of rapid mobilization by simple "*publication par voie d'affiches sur la voie publiques.*"

It is not alone the saving of time that would be so important, but the commensurate immunity from naval disaster, and the possibility of our

having to close the Mediterranean against foreign navys, by a complete system of torpedoes across the Straits of Gibraltar.

I am confident this proposal will meet with but little opposition in France, for the reason I have before hinted at—that Britain would then form a permanent barrier against German aggression.

On the other hand, it will certainly meet the approval of German statesmen—as it will put them at their ease for the future regarding possible Gallic sinister designs towards Alsace and Lorraine.

France herself, confined within her natural limits, compact and elate, will, I feel confident, then enter upon a career of solid advancement and true glory, compared with which the past would appear a troubled dream.

It is evident to everyone that it would occupy too much space here to enter fully into the details concerning the government of the new territory added to the English Empire—the number of representatives it should send to Westminster—the establishment of a police force, drawn from the people of the country, like our Irish Constabulary—and other important considerations. I must leave such minor details to be

worked out by persons who have the time at their disposal.

I may, however, say a few words regarding the religious aspects of the question. I trust the proposal will not be taken up in a narrow spirit by Exeter Hall as affording an opportunity for spreading the truths of Protestantism. Judging by the light of history, I believe that the most absolute respect must be paid by us to the religious susceptibilities of our new subjects. Government becomes all but impossible when the religious principles of peoples are interfered with. Until we learned this lesson in Ireland we were in constant danger from rebellion —greased cartridges almost cost us an Empire in India.

I am satisfied that the people of our French territory will, under our benign rule, rest happy and contented in the loss of their old government, so long as we permit them the utmost freedom in the exercise of their religious tenets, however dark and absurd they may be.

I would even be prepared to go further, and, considering our responsibilities and the interests at stake, would be willing to conciliate Roman Catholic sympathy on the Continent by exercising our influence with Victor Emmanuel to return

at least a portion of Roman territory to Pope Pius IX.

I conclude by confidently commending the whole scheme to the imperial instincts and capacities of the English people, and to a Cabinet composed of men of the highest abilities, presided over by a Prime Minister whose name is destined to rank with the names of the greatest statesmen of ancient and modern times.

FINIS.

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